

SAIMUN 2017 Research Report

Committee: General Assembly 2

Issue: Sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Southeast Asia

Student Officer: Chan Gyu Choi, Deputy Chair

1. Description of issue

The tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the 21st century, accounting for more than 10% of global GDP in 2016 and generating millions of employment each year. Many countries rely heavily on the tourism industry as their main source of income, as it is one of the top 5 exports in 83% of countries worldwide and is the main source of foreign income for 38%.

In regards to southeast asia, many nations are pursuing sustainability in tourism and development for various reasons. Due to its intensive nature of consumption of natural resources and human services, tourism has major impacts on a nation's economy, development, environment, ecosystems, societies and culture. However, the overall effects of tourism is if managed well, tourism can bring countless positive outcomes to a nation; if not, it will bring devastating effects to the nation as a whole.

The South East Asian region has been steadily investing in sustainable development. As a booming economy with high potentials, South East Asia is prone to socioeconomic as well as environmental challenges. In order to overcome these challenges, national leaders are investing continuous efforts. For example, establishing regional organizations such as ASEAN(Association of Southeast Asian Nations) to accelerate economic growth, social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members, alongside the protection of regional stability and the provision of a mechanism for member countries to resolve differences peacefully.

2. Definition of Key Terms

Tourism

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines Tourism as a service industry which means that it depends strongly on human resources at all levels (regional, national, international) and from many different service sectors. Simply put, Tourism includes not only travelling itself but also services such as accommodation, entertainment, food and restaurant, etc. However, this is not the sole definition of tourism, as there is no consensus concerning the definition of tourism.

Sustainability

The ability to be sustained, supported, upheld, or confirmed. In this case, sustainability means consumption of resources to a extent where nature can replenish itself without causing permanent damage to its rehabilitation abilities.

Sustainable Tourism

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. In other words, it is tourism that has minimum impact and conserves environmental, cultural aspects of the tourist destination, while maintaining a high level of tourist satisfaction and raising their awareness on sustainable tourism in order to promote sustainability in the region.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development was defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs in the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. In simple terms, it means developing with only the necessary amount of resources, to a extent that doesn't affect the usage our future generations.

United Nations World Tourism Organization

United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It is the leading international organization in the field of tourism, promoting tourism as a driver of economic growth, continuous development and environmental sustainability, offering leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders at the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change that build on the Millennium Development Goals. These include ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, making cities more sustainable, combating climate change, and protecting oceans and forests.

Ecotourism

Tourism that focuses on the tourist's observation and appreciation of nature and the traditional culture prevailing in natural areas. Its purpose may be to educate the traveler, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights

Timeline of Key Events

5-16 June, 1972	<p>The United Nations conference on the Human Environment Based in Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>Based in Stockholm, Sweden, the conference defined the term eco-development, which later evolved into sustainable development. Ecological preservation was first incorporated into a developing economic model in this conference.</p>
October 1987	<p>World Commission on Environment and Development</p> <p>The conference defined the term ‘sustainable development’ and specified Economic Growth, Environmental Protection, and Social Equality as the three main pillars of sustainable development.</p>
3-14 June, 1992	<p>The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development</p> <p>Also known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, this conference created multiple treaties such as Agenda 21, a nonbinding UN action agenda for the UN, other multilateral groups, and individual governments to promote sustainable development.</p>
6-8 September 2000	<p>The Millennium Summit</p> <p>Over 150 world leaders gathered at the United Nations headquarters in New York City and established the Millennium Development Goals, to achieve eight international development goals for the year 2015</p>
26 August to 4 September, 2002	<p>World Summit on Sustainable Development</p> <p>The United Nations convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, to discuss sustainable development and its implementations.</p>
March 2005	<p>Regional Forum on Environment and Health in Southeast and East Asian Countries</p> <p>Regional leaders from Southeast and East Asia came up with a global framework provided by Agenda 21 of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment</p>

	and Development and the Millennium Development Goals and their implementations
13-22 June 2012	The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio 2012) United Nations conference to accommodate global economic and environmental goals from previous action plans such as Agenda 21
25 September 2015	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 194 Member States convened at the United Nations headquarters in New York, and came up with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), containing 17 goals with 169 targets covering a broad range of sustainable development issues

Other relevant UN events and declarations

Québec Declaration on Ecotourism, May 2002

The Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism was written by more than a thousand governmental authorities, NGO members, and experts in the tourism industry. It talks about the preparatory processes regarding to ecotourism and specific guidelines for nations.

The Hague Declaration on Tourism, 1989

The Hague Declaration on Tourism is the first UN official conference to discuss about tourism as a whole, and specific issues such as socioeconomic issues, the environment, the right to leisure, facilitation of travel, education and training of personnel, and international cooperation.

Positions of Key Member Nations and Other Bodies on the Issue

Thailand

With its ancient culture and popular beaches, Thailand is a popular tourist attraction with 29 tourists, generating 38.4 billion Dollars in 2014. More than 2 million Thais are working in the

tourism industry, and tourism contributes an estimated 8.6% to GDP each year. A current problem for the tourism industry is its ubiquitous sex industry and increasing concerns of safety due to terrorism, and local unrest. Also, tourism is estimated to shrink in 2017, due to the loss of their king King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Vietnam

Vietnam's tourism industry has strongly grown during the last two decades, reaching an impressive annual growth of 12% and contributing to developing national economy. Tourism contributed for 4.6% of total GDP in 2015, and 7.7% of employment is working in the tourism industry. However, the current tourism development still faces many challenges, especially the competitiveness of destinations and sustainability compared to other southeastern nations. the Vietnamese Government is continuously investing in Infrastructure in general and tourism infrastructure to increase its competitiveness over other nations, but still has a long way to go.

Indonesia

Indonesia received \$10.69 billion in revenue in 2014 from more than 9 million tourists. Indonesia has exclusive tourist destinations concentrated on natural and cultural tourism. Tourism in Indonesia is an important component of the Indonesian economy as well as a major source of its foreign exchange revenues. In 2016, the government was reported to be investing more in tourism development to attract more foreign investors, aiming for 275 million trips by domestic tourists by the end of 2019. However, sex tourism, especially relating child prostitution remains a serious issue.

Philippines

tourism is an important sector for the Philippine economy. contributing 10.6% to the country's GDP in 2015. The country is known for having its rich biodiversity as its main tourist attraction. Over 5 million tourists visited the Philippines in 2015, and the number is

increasing annually. However, the rising threat of terrorism and the Duterte Government's infamous drug wars are becoming a serious threat to the industry as a whole.

Malaysia

Tourism has become Malaysia's third largest source of foreign exchange income, with total receipts of 15.4 billion Dollars in 2016. Malaysia is also known for its beautiful beaches, islands and national parks. Malaysia is ranked 2nd in Southeast Asia for tourist arrivals. In an effort to make Malaysia's economy less dependent on exports, the government invested to increase tourism in Malaysia. As a result, tourism has become Malaysia's third largest source of foreign exchange income. From 1999, Malaysia launched a worldwide marketing campaign called "Malaysia, Truly Asia" which was successful enough to bring in over 7.4 million tourists since.

Singapore

Tourism in Singapore is a major industry and contributor to the Singaporean economy. It is the most visited country in the southeastern region, attracting 15,231,469 international tourists in 2015, over thrice of Singapore's total population. Singapore is packed with tourist attractions, from cultural and historical landmarks, natural sightseeing, shopping, resorts, and medical tourism.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Previous attempts to solve the issues pertaining to sustainable development and sustainable tourism are mostly symbolic gestures and non-binding agreements. Local governmental efforts includes passing laws regarding to the tourism industry, both foreign and local. These laws include preventive measures against exploitation of labour and child labor.

Moreover, governments have invested in overall infrastructure and environmental preservation measures. They have also established tourist-training programs to ensure that foreign visitors do not disrespect the traditional culture or destroy the environment. The

effectiveness of these programs varies in each state; while there are some successful cases, external factors such as a state's political situation affect tourist promotion programs.

The role of the UN is mostly to promote measures for sustainable tourism and continue implementing policies that support the Sustainable Development Goals.

Suggested Solutions

Although the tourism industry greatly helps the Economies and the people of Southeast Asian Nations, they still bring numerous drawbacks such as the encouragement of prostitution, destruction of forests and indigenous species, and many more. The United Nations can help to solve these problems by encouraging states to enforce stricter policies on the tourist industry, especially industries associated with child labor, prostitution, and exploitation of the environment. Also, member nations should follow aforementioned action plans, and frameworks with continuous aid from agencies such as UNWTO and UNESCO in order to solve problems caused by tourism.

In order to find out specific problems, communication with local communities is crucial, as solving problems start from reliable data from the locals. In most areas, however, promoting Small enterprises as opposed to large-scale tourism generally lowers environmental impact and encourages local growth, as large industries may cause foreign exchange leakage. On the other hand, small enterprises consists of locals that open small businesses for their own livelihood. Lastly, cooperation with stakeholders must be ensured to sustain the benefits to tourism.

Both the public and private sector benefit economically from tourism and thus both should take responsibility in solving the issues associated with it. Comprehensive planning and continuous communications between stakeholders can help to lead sustainable development that involves all stakeholders interests

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